

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EURE-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 INRE-00 OES-03

NASA-01 SS-15 NSC-05 PRS-01 L-03 PA-01 CPR-01 CIAE-00

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O 141252Z JUL 75

FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2190

INFO USIA WASHDC IMMEDIATE

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STATE FOR EUR/SOV; USIA FOR IEU

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: SOPN

SUBJECT: PETITION BY LOCAL CORRESPONDENTS ASKING AMBASSADOR
NOT TO ATTEND ASTP BLASTOFF

1. FOLLOWING LETTER DATED JULY 12 WAS RECEIVED BY EMBASSY
THIS MORNING. "DEAR MR. AMBASSADOR: IN VIEW OF THE CON-
TINUING SOVIET REFUSAL TO ADMIT AMERICAN REPORTERS TO THE
BAIKONUR LAUNCH SITE OF THE APOLLO-SOYUZ MISSION, THE UNDER-
SIGNED AMERICAN CORRESPONDENTS PERMANENTLY ACCREDITED IN
MOSCOW RESPECTFULLY URGE THAT THE DECISION THAT YOU ATTEND
THOSE CEREMONIES JULY 15 BE RECONSIDERED AND REVERSED.
UNLESS AMERICAN JOURNALISTS ARE PERMITTED TO COVER THAT
EVENT AT BAIKONUR, WE FEAR THAT YOUR ATTENDANCE WILL MAKE
IT APPEAR THAT AMERICAN OFFICIALS CONDONE THE RESTRICTIVE
SOVIET PRACTICES THAT PREVENT US FROM JOINING YOU.

"A REVERSAL OF THE DECISION ALREADY ANNOUNCED WOULD, WE
BELIEVE, BE MORE THAN JUST A WASTED GESTURE. IT WOULD
SERVE TO RECONFIRM THE AMERICAN COMMITMENT TO THE
PRINCIPLE OF RECIPROCITY WHICH WAS MEANT TO GUIDE BOTH
THE APOLLO-SOYUZ EXPERIMENT AND PUBLIC ACCESS TO INFOR-
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MATION ON ITS PROGRESS. AS LONG AS CAPE CANAVERAL IS

OPEN TO SOVIET JOURNALISTS AND BAIKONUR IS OPEN ONLY TO YOU, THAT PRINCIPLE APPEARS VIOLATED.

"WE HOPE YOU WILL GIVE OUR REQUEST PROMPT AND SERIOUS CONSIDERATION." LETTER WAS SIGNED BY ELEVEN LOCAL AMERICAN CORRESPONDENTS INCLUDING NEW YORK TIMES, WASHINGTON POST, LOS ANGELES TIMES, PRESS AGENCIES, NEWSWEEK, ETC.

2. AMBASSADOR CALLED MFA USA DIVISION HEAD KORNIYENKO AND INFORMED HIM REGARDING THIS MATTER. HE POINTED OUT THAT U.S. SIDE FROM THE BEGINNING HAS FEARED THAT SOVIET REFUSAL TO ALLOW CORRESPONDENTS TO VIEW LAUNCHING WOULD EVOKE NEGATIVE REACTION AND WOULD BE BAD PUBLIC RELATIONS. THE AMBASSADOR SAID THAT ALTHOUGH THIS WAS VERY LATE IN THE GAME HE WOULD STILL WISH TO URGE KORNIYENKO THAT IT MIGHT BE POSSIBLE TO ARRANGE FOR AT LEAST ONE AMERICAN CORRESPONDENT, USING POOL ARRANGEMENTS, TO VIEW LAUNCHING. THE AMBASSADOR ALSO CONFIRMED THAT HE WOULD BE ATTENDING ASTP LAUNCH AS SCHEDULED.

3. KORNIYENKO REPLIED THAT HOW WE DEALT WITH AND WHAT WE SAY TO OUR CORRESPONDENTS WAS OUR OWN AFFAIR. HE CONFIRMED THAT THIS MATTER HAD BEEN RAISED MANY TIMES AND HAD BEEN GIVEN SERIOUS CONSIDERATION. HOWEVER, HE ADDED THAT HE DOUBTED WHETHER AMBASSADOR'S REQUEST COULD BE FURTHER CONSIDERED AT THIS TIME.

4. AMBASSADOR WILL BE DEBRIEFING WITH AMERICAN CORRESPONDENTS JULY 16 AFTER HIS RETURN FROM BAIKONUR. REQUEST FULL REPORT ON STATUS ACCREDITATION SOVIET JOURNALISTS COVERING CANAVERAL AND HOUSTON MISSION CONTROL. UNLESS INSTRUCTED OTHERWISE, AT THAT DEBRIEFING AMBASSADOR PLANS TO EXPRESS ON THE RECORD HIS PERSONAL REGRET THAT NO U.S. CORRESPONDENTS COULD ACCOMPANY HIM TO BAIKONUR. DEPARTMENT SPOKESMAN MAY ALSO WISH TO MAKE SIMILAR STATEMENT. STOESEL

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